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OTHER MATTERS

Note verbale dated 30 March 1998 from the Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

The Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and has the honour to inform him that the Government of the Czech Republic hosted the Fourth International Workshop on Indicators of Sustainable Development in January 1998 as a follow-up to similar international seminars held previously.

In order to facilitate the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its sixth session, the Government of the Czech Republic requests that the attached report of the Workshop be made available as an official document of the Commission.

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** The attachment is being issued in the language of submission only.

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Fourth International Workshop
on Indicators of Sustainable Development

Hosted by the Government of the Czech Republic
supported by the European Commission

Prague, the Czech Republic
19-21 January 1998

Report

I. Introduction

1. In support of the CSD Work Programme on Indicators of Sustainable Development, the Government of the Czech Republic, with assistance provided by the European Commission, convened the Fourth International Workshop on Indicators of Sustainable Development. The workshop was held in Prague from 19 to 21 January 1998 and follows previous workshops held in Ghent, Belgium and Glen Cove, USA. The main purpose of the workshop was to bring together those countries involved in the national testing of indicators of sustainable development and to promote the exchange of experience among testing countries and to develop conclusions and recommendations for improving the testing process and the further development of indicators. The meeting covered the main areas presented below. The final report of the workshop will be submitted by the Government of the Czech Republic to the sixth session of the CSD in April 1998

2. The programme of the meeting is contained in Annex I, the List of Participants in Annex II and the summaries of individual country presentations in Annex III of this document.

3. The workshop was attended by 19 of 21 testing countries including: Barbados, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, The Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Kenya, Maldives, Mexico, Morocco, The Philippines, South Africa, The United Kingdom and Venezuela

II. Opening of the Workshop

4. Mr. Vladislav Bizek, the Deputy Minister of the Environment of the Czech Republic and Mr. Bedrich Moldan of Charles University opened the workshop. Ms. Minna Wilkki, representing the European Commission and Mr. Lowell Flanders, representing the Secretariat of the Commission

on Sustainable Development also made introductory and welcoming remarks on behalf of their respective organizations.

III. Adoption of the Agenda and Election of Officers

5. The workshop elected Mr. Vladislav Bizek, Deputy Minister of Environment, the Czech Republic as Chair of the meeting. Mr. Edwin Barnes (Ghana), Mr. Bedrich Moldan (Czech Republic) and Mr. Lowell Flanders (CSD Secretariat) were elected co-chairs. The meeting elected Ms. Nadine Gouzée (Belgium) as rapporteur of the meeting. The meeting adopted the Draft Agenda which was submitted.

IV. Results of the UN Special Session and Status of the CSD Work Programme on Indicators of Sustainable Development

6. Mr. Lowell Flanders and Ms. Birgitte Bryld representing the Secretariat of the Commission on Sustainable Development, reviewed the results of the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) in June 1997 and brought participants up to date on the status of implementation of the CSD Work Programme on Indicators of Sustainable Development. The main areas of success in the UNGASS process were highlighted. The completion of three regional briefing and training workshops for Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa regions were noted. In response to the need for availability of main documents in French and Spanish as identified at these workshops, the document *Indicators of Sustainable Development: Framework and Methodologies*, has been sent to translation and should be near completion. It was emphasized that implementation and testing of indicators are underway in all regions of the world, although some countries are more advanced than others are. Of the 21 countries that confirmed their participation in the process, all have submitted information on their respective focal points and coordinating mechanism, and about half have submitted reports containing their initial proposals of how to organize the testing procedure within their countries.

V. Results of Regional Workshops and Regional Indicator Initiatives

7. Mr. Adrian G. Rodriguez, representative of the Government of Costa Rica, presented the results of the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Workshop hosted by the Government of Costa Rica, from 10-12 March 1997, in connection with a national conference under the National System for Sustainable Development (SINADES) framework. The workshop had the overall objective to brief participants from National Councils for Sustainable Development, ministries of planning or the ministry responsible for environment and sustainable development, on the CSD Work Programme, and provide in-depth training in the use of indicators as tools to support national planning and

decision-making. Participants included representatives from 15 countries, UN organizations, and government experts in indicator use. A series of conclusions and recommendations were highlighted, including that such workshops were needed to provide a better appreciation of the relationship between priority setting and measurement and the methodological issues related to SD indicators. Developing and applying indicators takes time, effort, and commitment over the long term, and must be pragmatic, flexible, and build on national strengths. Information sharing and capacity-building among nations and organizations were mentioned as important.

8. Mr. Aslam M. Khan, representing ESCAP, presented the work ongoing in the Asian and Pacific region. ESCAP has initiated a regional approach to the CSD Indicators of Sustainable Development for the Asian and Pacific region. This includes preparation of Terms of Reference for National Testing and other training materials and workshops at the regional and national levels. ESCAP hosted, in cooperation with the Government of the Netherlands and DPCSD, a regional workshop, from 26-29 November 1996. The results of the workshop and follow-up activities are now available in an ESCAP publication. The workshop helped to highlight the relationship between priority setting and measurement in charting a course to sustainable development. It was recognized that the Coordinating Mechanism at the national level would need to be country specific, due to the variety of governmental structures. However, the idea of a national inter-agency coordination mechanism was strongly endorsed, emphasizing the essential need to include the Planning Ministry, to ensure implementation. Regional follow-up includes provision of small seed funds to testing countries, to enable them to organize national workshops and promote case studies.

9. Mr. Edwin Barnes, representing the Government of Ghana, presented the African Regional Capacity 21/DPCSD Workshop on Indicators of Sustainable Development, hosted by the Government of Ghana, in Accra, from 3-6 June 1996. Part I of the workshop dealt with the indicators programme, Part II dealt with the Capacity 21 Programme. The workshop concentrated on discussing priorities and the related indicators of sustainable development, specific for the region. Key priorities were reported to include among others poverty, access to services, natural resource degradation, desertification, high population growth rates and capacity building. The "Blue Book" was seen as a comprehensive information tool and starting point, but did not include all issues relevant to the region such as indicators for governance, competition for natural resources and policy and strategy formulation. The workshop stressed the need for financial and human resource support at the national level, based on the fact that one major problem facing most countries was the availability and reliability of data, including the institutional framework for data collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination. The workshop created awareness among participants of the CSD indicator approach and usefulness to monitor national decision-making. National implementation should ensure that all identifiable stakeholders are included and that testing should be incorporated into the national development process. It was urged that documentation, such as the Blue Book, be made available in French for French speaking African countries.

10. Mr. Arab Hoballah, representing the Mediterranean Action Plan/Blue Plan, presented the activities undertaken in the Mediterranean context. The Blue Plan, as a component of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) launched by UNEP, undertakes studies of the interaction between population, human activities, development and the environment by elaborating a series of trends and alternative scenarios, strengthened by the establishment of a Mediterranean Environment and Development Observatory function, including the development of indicators. The Mediterranean countries and MAP have taken considerable action in follow-up to the Rio process, including the preparation of an Agenda 21 for the Mediterranean Region, MED 21, and the establishment of a Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development/MCSD. Establishment of a twinning arrangement between France and Tunisia was noted with the Blue Plan acting as an intermediary. Some elements that were highlighted as priorities for the further work on indicators on the region, included the need for data-comparability, relativity of norms for performance, Indicators for un-sustainable development and a multi partner approach. The selection of indicators will be based on existing concepts, topologies and forms adapted to the region all to be discussed at a series of indicator related meetings between now and 1999.

11. Ms. Marie-Paule Benassi representing EUROSTAT, informed the workshop on their work in relation to the CSD indicators programme. EUROSTAT undertook a pilot study following the CSD methodology using statistics from European Union Member States. The compilation has been made available in the publication *"Indicators of Sustainable Development"* in July 1997, and presents 46 indicators from the CSD list, illustrating trends over time, and comments on trends observed, where relevant. 9 economic, 14 social, 21 environmental and 2 institutional indicators were selected. It was noted that even for the European countries, comparability and uniformity of statistical data, as well as accessibility and availability had been an obstacle in the selection process. Future activities of EUROSTAT include comparison of experiences with the European testing countries and feedback of results for the revision of the CSD indicators and methodology sheets, improvements of data availability and quality of environmental indicators, cooperation with other international organisations and a possible follow-up indicator publication.

VI. Country Reports

12. In order to provide a common starting point for the further discussions, each participating country presented a status report on national implementation. A summary version of these reports is contained in Annex III of the present report.

VII. Results of Small Working Group Sessions

13. The main discussion and exchange of views and information took place in the small working group sessions. The results of these discussions have been synthesized into the main conclusions and recommendations at the end of this report. Please refer to Section XI.

VIII. Status of Related Indicator Initiatives

14. Mr. Peter Bartelmus, representing the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD), informed participants of their methods of work and current activities under implementation, related to the CSD work on ISDs. A regional workshop on environmental statistics, indicators and accounting was convened in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa. A report of the meeting was made available to all participants. Furthermore, work is progressing in compiling environmental indicators from national statistical services based on a core set of indicators, as approved by the Statistical Commission at its twenty-eighth session. As part of the methodological work of UNSD in this field, a "Manual on Environmental Statistics and Indicators" is being prepared. The manual will contain concepts, definitions, classifications, and descriptions of data sources, tabulations and data uses for the environmental indicators specified by the Inter-governmental Working Group on the Advancement of Environment Statistics. It is expected to be completed by the end of 1998. Finally, he informed the meeting of their work on follow-up on the social development themes of recent major United Nations conferences. The United Nations Statistical Commission, at its twenty-ninth session in 1997, endorsed a Minimum National Social Data Set (MNSDS), emphasizing that it should be considered as a minimum list which users can build on to meet national needs and circumstances.

15. Starting with an outlook towards a colourful future of "tools for sustainable development" based on a System of Social Performance Indicators developed and discussed in the Consultative Group on Sustainable Development Indicators, Mr. Jochen Jesinghaus representing Eurostat, presented the latest state of the European Environmental Pressure Indices Project, which aims to treat the environmental component of sustainable development by giving a comprehensive and systematic description of the most important human activities affecting the environment. The project is a corner stone of the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on "Directions for the EU on Environmental Indicators and Green National Accounting" and is closely coordinated with the European Environment Agency (EEA). Methodology sheets similar to the UN CSD format have been developed for 100 pressure indicators. Eurostat plans to publish the first set of 60 indicators in the autumn of 1998. A website for this publication has been installed at: http://www.telecom.es/~tau/enviroindicators.htm (Note: the character before tau is a tilde, ASCII 126). As soon as the indicators become available, a pilot aggregation to a set of ten indices is foreseen. The pressure indices project covers the environmental component of sustainable development in a very systematic way. However, it is obviously tailored to the very complexed policy setting of the EU and thus hardly compatible with the environmental indicators in the CSD menu. Eurostat and DGXI will continue, however, to work in parallel with the CSD list, and attach a high political weight to the CSD process. For example, the first SD indicators publication that had been produced for UNGASS will soon be available in German and Spanish.

16. Ms. Catherine Rubbens of the CSD Secretariat introduced an initiative to develop a set of

indicators for changing consumption and production patterns undertaken in the context of the International Work Programme on Changing Consumption and Production Patterns (IWPCCPP). In this context, the Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) is hosting a Workshop on Indicators for Changing Consumption and Production Patterns on 2-3 March 1998, in New York. The activity of identifying and developing indicators for changing consumption and production patterns is undertaken in relation to both the IWPCCPP, and the Work Programme on Indicators of Sustainable Development of the CSD. It was stressed in the context of both programmes that further work is needed to measure critical trends in consumption and production patterns. Moreover, the CSD called the Secretariat and Governments, at its fifth session, to "develop core indicators to monitor critical trends in consumption and production patterns, with industrialized countries taking the lead". This request was also included in the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, adopted by the General Assembly at its Nineteenth Special Session on 23-27 June 1997.

17. Chapter 4 of Agenda 21 is "cross-sectoral", in that it covers various sectors, such as transportation, tourism, energy, waste, agriculture, and water; and allows for links with other elements from Agenda 21, including technology transfer, and trade and environment. Since the Rio Conference, efforts have been made by various countries, organizations, and major groups to strengthen understanding of sustainable consumption and production, and to determine the responsibilities of various actors for changing consumption and production patterns. Key elements of the discussion on the topic are the examination of consumer behaviour impeding sustainable development and ways to change such behaviour, together with the identification of the most effective and efficient policy instruments for addressing unsustainable patterns. The discussions also allow for considering distributional aspects of consumption and production patterns.

18. The challenge of the current activity is to identify a provisional core set of indicators for measuring changes in consumption and production patterns, by reflecting these key objectives for policy development and implementation. For this purpose, consultations were held with partners involved in discussions on changing consumption and production patterns, including policy makers and indicator experts. On the basis of these consultations, the CSD Secretariat prepared a background paper for the Workshop. Participants at the Workshop will include policy makers and experts on changing consumption and production patterns and indicators of sustainable development, from Governments, international organisations, and major groups, such as the business and research communities and NGOs. The outcome of the Workshop, including conclusions and policy recommendations, will serve as an input to the CSD Work Programme on Indicators of Sustainable Development, and the revision of its set of indicators of sustainable development in 1999-2000. The report of the Workshop will be made available to the CSD at its seventh session in 1999, as part of a major review of chapter 4 of Agenda 21.

19. Mr. Bedrich Moldan, representing SCOPE, informed participants of the SCOPE Project on Indicators of Sustainable Development which was initiated in February 1994 by the Czech National

Council of SCOPE. The project's aim was to bring together specialists in the scientific and academic communities at the cutting edge of work on ISDs, to stimulate further research to resolve outstanding problems, and to synthesize results from various research groups for use by policy makers and other users. From the beginning, the project was conceived not as a mere academic exercise, but to operate in close connection with the needs of the international community as outlined by the CSD delegates. The project was intended to support the CSD process in a way that would be acceptable to member countries. SCOPE planned to focus on the scientific aspects of the issue. The political sensitivity surrounding indicators manifest at CSD II, however, altered the course of the project. It became clear that political support needed to be stronger if work on ISDs was to progress in the CSD context and beyond. Moreover, it was necessary if indicators were to be eventually accepted and used at the United Nations level. In order to address the political concerns about ISDs, SCOPE scientists teamed up with the representatives from Belgium and Costa Rica. With UNEP and the UN Division for Sustainable Development, Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD), they organized an international workshop, "Indicators of Sustainable Development for Decision-Making" (Ghent, 9-11 January 1995). Apart from a few experts, the invited participants included government representatives from countries around the world and members of inter-governmental organizations.

20. At the Ghent workshop an important breakthrough was made in the political dialogue about indicators. A fruitful exchange emerged between diplomats and politicians from both developed and developing countries on one side, and scientists on the other. The workshop concluded with a call for increased global efforts to develop ISDs and a mandate for the scientific community to perform a specific role within this process. Following the Ghent workshop, the Government of Belgium presented the workshop reports at CSD III in 1995. This time, the CSD fully embraced the idea of quickly developing an appropriate set of ISDs. The proponents of indicators won a sweeping victory As a result of the CSD decision, a Programme of Work on Indicators of Sustainable Development was accepted that detailed a course for future international work over several years. The SCOPE work was mentioned throughout the decision document, and the role of the scientific community was defined and emphasized. In order to stimulate work and push forward the process within the scientific community, and to begin synthesizing the multifarious approaches to sustainable development indicators, SCOPE organized a large international workshop. This time the project joined with the Government of Germany, which hosted the event. The workshop was held in Wuppertal, Germany on 15-17 November 1995. The Volume "Sustainability Indicators" (edited by Bedrich Moldan and Suzanne Billharz. John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, 1997, 426 pp.) is the culmination of the work of SCOPE scientists over several years. It offers a rich diversity of perspectives and approaches described by more than 50 contributors from many different countries and cultures, working in a wide range of fields and organizations at all levels. It is an overview and the beginning of a synthesis of the most up-to-date work in this area, offering directions for future work and research. It was presented to all delegations of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session, New York, June 1997.

IX. Main Issues Related to linkages and Aggregation

21. Mr. Arthur Dahl from UNEP, described recent developments in linking and aggregating indicators, including materials flows analyses, Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping, and work by the Consultative Group on Sustainable Development Indicators which was developing approaches to highly aggregated indices of sustainable development. Such indices should cover the major dimensions of sustainable development, and should include measures of the state/stock, the flow/trend, and related processes including driving forces and management responses, as in the CSD indicators framework. Indicators could be arranged in nested arrays with ever-higher levels of aggregation, as long as the units and types of measurement were internally compatible. For each parameter, a direction, target, trajectory or model would be necessary to evaluate whether the state and/or trend was more or less sustainable. The results could be signalled on a five point scale ranging from green for fully sustainable via yellow to red for highly unsustainable, when graphic presentations are used or the results are mapped. It is such signals, and particularly warning signals or scales of unsustainability, that can be aggregated most easily in simple indices that flag for decision-makers those areas requiring management action, just as the instruments in an aircraft cockpit signal the flight path and performance of an airplane.

22. These arrays of aggregated indicators can be mapped in circular fashion to the compass directions, with the environmental component of Nature measured in physical units, the Economic component in monetary units, the Social component including institutional dimensions in various social science measures, and the component of individual Welfare in demographic, percent population or per capita units. These four basic components of the sustainable development of human society would need to be linked along another axis to measures of ultimate human satisfaction and well-being that are the purpose of all development, and to the sustainability of the biosphere and its life support systems, upon which human well-being ultimately rests.

23. This conceptual framework should allow the inter-relation and eventual convergence of the various approaches to indicators of sustainable development in a format that can be understood by decision-makers and the general public. It is flexible for use at the local, national or international levels, and can be related to efforts to model the underlying linkages in the human and natural systems. Countries were urged to see how this framework might give some policy-relevant structure to their indicator activities.

24. Mr. Peter Hardi, who provides the secretariat at IISD for the Consultative Group, described the plans of the group to develop this conceptual framework with illustrative examples of aggregate indices, and expressed the offer of the Consultative Group to collaborate with DESA and interested testing countries in supporting the further development of the CSD indicators programme.

X. Phase III of the CSD Work Programme on Indicators of Sustainable Development

25. Ms. Birgitte Bryld, representing the CSD Secretariat, introduced the proposed elements included in Phase III of the work programme on indicators of sustainable development which will be implemented from January 1998 - January 2000. It focuses on the development of the Driving Force - State - Response framework (DSR), possible linkages and aggregation and further refinement of the indicators contained in the current list. Working partners were invited to the Fourth Expert Group Meeting on Indicators of Sustainable Development in October 1997, to review current initiatives relevant to phase III of the work programme, solicit inputs for a longer term strategy and how these parallel programmes may compliment and fit into the CSD indicator process. The meeting proposed an implementation plan for phase III which includes elements such as continuing close follow-up and information exchange related to the national implementation of the indicators programme, revision of the current working list of indicators and methodology sheets, information exchange and follow-up of parallel national and international initiatives and processes also underway to define additional sectoral and cross-sectoral indicators. Work on indicators i.e, in the areas of forestry, land management, vulnerability of small island developing states, biodiversity and changing consumption and production patterns is proceeding and should be incorporated at a certain stage. More work is needed, and will be pursued, to understand the interlinkages between indicators and to integrate their economic, social, environmental and institutional dimensions in more aggregated measures.

XI. Conclusions and Recommendations

26 The participants expressed their gratitude to the Government of the Czech Republic and the European Commission for the organization of this useful workshop. They also thanked the host for their generous hospitality in this beautiful area of their country.

27 The workshop regarded the phase II of the Work Programme on Indicators of sustainable Development as successfully completed by the participating countries, involved organizations within and outside the UN-system and the CSD Secretariat. The workshop furthermore expressed their support of the plan for the implementation of Phase III of the work programme, which will take place from January 1998 - December 2000.

Organization

Focal Points

28. Most countries have appointed national focal points for testing the CSD indicators, but several

have yet to do so. The Workshop recognized that the appointment of a national focal point is crucial for the success of the testing to facilitate the communication and coordination among all participants. Where the national focal point is a political officer, a contact point at the working level could also be identified to maintain regular and ongoing relations internally and with other testing countries and the CSD.

29. In general, national focal points in different countries have been located in ministries of environment, planning, or statistical offices. However, irrespective of location, it is vital that the focal point has close and effective working relationships with all departments and with the CSD national focal point. It was recommended that focal points and DESA maintain close, informal and frequent communication with each other.

National Coordinating Mechanism

30. Participants in the Workshop were encouraged by the successful experiences of some countries in linking the testing to existing national committee structures. These were particularly productive where the national focal point was the secretary or a key player in these committees. In other countries, the indicators of sustainable development (ISD) testing acted as a positive catalyst in the establishment of new mechanisms for the development of both national indicators and national sustainable development strategies.

31. Delegates recognized the need for close coordination of the indicator work with established national statistics committees and programs within Governments and also with indicator-related work done by other institutes and NGOs.

Involvement of Major Groups and Stakeholders

32. The Workshop recognized the need for all government departments to be involved in the development of sustainable development strategies and indicators. It is essential that national environment departments have sufficient authority to support data collection and information gathering where other departments are involved.

33. All participants stressed the need for NGOs, the private sector, and other major groups referred to in Agenda 21, to be fully integrated in the process of developing national sustainable development initiatives. In many cases, they can provide continuity and long term stability for national priorities, independent of changes in national government.

34. In many developing countries, NGOs, the private sector, and other major groups were already involved in the national coordinating committees for environment and sustainable development, and their participation gave added impetus to the national process. In the case of some developed

countries, initial work on ISDs was conducted within government, with the plan that subsequent phases of the work would involve consultations with Major Groups.

Experience with Twinning Arrangements

35. Twinning experiences have taken a variety of forms, ranging from "equal partners" where twinning involved largely sharing and exchanging experiences, to partnerships where one country was providing significant support and advice to enable testing to be carried out by their partner.

36. In many cases, developing countries need technical support and expertise to carry forward indicators development and use, which can be provided through twinning. In addition, they may also need financial assistance, additional resources and possible advisory support to start the process, which could be provided by other international programs.

37. The Workshop recognized that useful cooperation may be fostered between more than two countries. For example, south/south cooperation between two countries with common problems and experience, supported by a developed country could be a useful model.

38. It was suggested that twinning arrangements need not be limited to work on indicators, but could cover broader sustainable development issues.

39. Alternatives to twinning were explored. Suggestions included some countries giving targeted support for particular problems in a second country. There could be considerable benefits to increased sharing of experiences between all testing countries, and this might be done through greater use of the internet, coordinated by DESA. It was recommended that ad hoc partnership arrangements between developed and developing countries to organize workshops for capacity building could help stimulate implementation of the CSD work program on indicators. These partnership arrangements are also useful for the preparation and organization of inter-governmental inter-sessional workshops on ISDs (such as the workshops in Glen Cove, Ghent and Prague).

Implementation

Adequacy of National Institutional Arrangements to Carry-Out an Indicators Programme

40. Several countries expressed the need for a clear mandate or legal framework as a basis on which to initiate work on sustainable development in general and indicators in particular. The complexity of the legal process was cited as a drawback in some countries, but providing a context of enabling legislation could be useful in some specific cases.

41. The process of indicator development was recognized as involving extensive coordination and

consultation among many national government organizations and agencies and put particularly heavy demands on the limited staff resources generally made available for this purpose. In some cases, coordination was complicated by the fact the responsibility for coordination was frequently given to the Environment Ministry, with the implication that sustainable development indicators are considered mainly an environmental issue. It was recommended that Ministries of Planning or other Governmental agencies play a more active role in this process to emphasize the wider government responsibility for indicators of sustainable development.

42. Lack of continuity in support of the indicators programme due to political changes at the national level was cited as a potential problem in some countries. It was recommended that the active involvement of civil society and major groups could help to ensure on-going political support and continuity for the programme. In this regard, broad public awareness, understanding and support for the process was seen as important to the institutional strength and continuity of the national programme. Efforts at public awareness raising were strongly recommended.

Institutional Support

43. Most countries cited the lack of staff resources to effectively carry out the testing process. Additional funding and budgetary support would be useful to strengthen the testing process as well as data collection and other statistical services.

44. Support at the political and decision-making levels was found to be crucial for the vitality and viability of the indicators programme. Keeping key policy and decision-makers aware of and involved in the process was strongly recommended.

Capacity Building

45. All countries identified the need for additional efforts at capacity building and training at the national and local level, including data collection, to support the indicators programme and to support the national use of indicators. It was recommended that international organizations play a more active role in this capacity building effort. Greater support could be provided by the Regional Economic Commissions, UNDP's Capacity 21 Programme as well as the regional programmes, and the regional development banks. Additional resources should be provided to DSD/DESA to help meet the capacity building needs of the testing countries.

46. It was noted that workshops at the national level are an important means to raise the awareness and knowledge of the indicator process by key policy and decision-makers. At the same time, workshops at the local and working level are essential for raising awareness and for gathering new data and information to support the indicator process.

National Strategies and Indicator Selection

47. It was recognized that there is no uniform national experience with regard to the adoption of national strategies for sustainable development. The existence of such strategies or other methods of establishing national priorities for sustainable development was seen as crucial in selecting and testing indicators of sustainable development. At the same time, the use of indicators can contribute to improved policy formulation and priority setting. In this context, the preparation of national strategies and the selection and use of indicators should be based on a broad consultative process involving key government agencies and the public.

Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment of the CSD ISD working list

48. The CSD ISD working list is a good start, as it has built awareness of indicators and of sustainable development issues. Countries need to select those indicators that are relevant to their national priorities and goals. While some indicators may be common to most countries, others may vary in relevance depending on local conditions or levels of development.

49. The Driving Force - State - Response framework may not be as relevant in some countries for social and economic indicators as for environmental indicators. There are also significant gaps in the coverage of issues and in some types of indicators, such as institutional indicators. More measures are needed to cover all relevant sustainable development issues and to promote integration. Countries developing other indicators during the testing phase to fill these gaps should share their proposals so that others can see if they have wider relevance to the future revision of the working list.

Methodology

50. Methodology sheets could be related more closely to user and producer needs, including both shorter summaries for initial review and selection, and more complete descriptions of methods rather than references to other sources that may not be readily available to users. The DESA web site on indicators should include pages for each indicator, with the methodology sheet, and comments and evaluations from testing countries showing which have been selected and the reason for their inclusion or exclusion from the national indicator lists.

51. While the use of standard methods is important, countries with good time series using modified methods should be free to use them, while explaining the difference in method. Reviews of the methods and indicator selection should involve those who may, in particular, have a critical view of new indicators, to build a wider consensus where possible.

Data Availability and Data Gaps

52. Data availability is often a problem, particularly with environmental data where there is no tradition of national compilation, and departments holding data may not be willing to share them. Statistical offices should be more involved in the assessment of data sources and collection of data required for the compilation of indicators of sustainable development. Indicators can help to define clear data requirements. Guidelines for quality assurance of data are needed. Countries should select important indicators even if the data are not immediately available.

Linkages and Aggregation

53. Only relatively few countries have experience with aggregated indices, at this stage. Some relevant examples at the international level includes the work on environmental accounting, the Human Development Index, the European Commissions work on pressure indices and work by the Asian Development Bank. Linkages between economic, social, environmental and institutional sectors need to be further developed. There is a strong political demand for a few key indicators/indices at the national level which may require further work on linkages and aggregation.

Overall Usefulness and Relevance

54. "The overall indicator process has been useful in increasing awareness of sustainable development, and in bringing people together to share information and integrate their activities. It is leading to a better assessment of the status of and needs for information. However, it is not enough just to publish lists of indicators, as they need to be explained and analysed. The process is still far from reflecting progress towards the achievement of sustainable development with all its implications

Reporting Requirements

Friendliness of the Reporting Format

55. Only a few countries have actually used the reporting format at this stage, and further experience and comments would be available as the testing progresses. It was recommended that the format for annual reporting by testing countries be made available in hard, soft and web versions to ensure proper accessibility and use and that the format for annual reporting be made available for direct entry in the web version.

Changes in the Format

56. National focal points may wish to condense the format for internal use, keeping in mind the compatibility with the original format.

57. It was seen as important to go through regular review of reporting requirements for the testing process in order to adapt to national/international needs regarding other reporting requirements on sustainable development.

58. The section in the reporting format related to definitions and methods used should be highlighted, if different from those proposed in the CSD methodology.

59. Reporting on indicators and methodologies should be possible in other UN languages provided additional outside financial support is made available for this purpose.

60. It was recommended to secure, through adequate internal organization, a regular reporting process to the CSD Secretariat.

61. Justification for indicator selection should be reported for each indicator.

62. Where relevant, a regional breakdown of information and data availability should be included in the reporting.

Lessons Learned/Further Issues

63. The indicator development process has promoted the establishment of coordinating mechanisms and cooperation among other agencies and bodies at the national and international level, which has improved the overall knowledge and interrelationship between sectors and institutions at various levels.

64. It was seen as necessary to find an appropriate mechanism to improve coherence between local, national and major groups initiatives in indicator development, where appropriate.

65. Indicator development has been an important catalyst in the debate on major sustainable development issues and a good opportunity to involve NGOs and other partners to increase public acceptability and understanding of indicators.

66. Indicator development has influenced policy identification and implementation both inside and outside the government.

67. The indicator process has been a good opportunity to bring together users and producers of indicators, and therefore deserves increased attention and support.

68. An indicator development process needs highly dedicated people with adequate resources, and clear institutional support, to secure satisfactory implementation.

69. The process needs to evolve from the development of indicators FOR sustainable development, to indicators OF sustainable development through an integrative approach.

70. Taking into account national priorities, it was recommended to review the existing list of indicators to include, where appropriate, other related issues such as consumption and production, transport and tourism.

71. The need for substantial additional resources to support the indicator development process was strongly recommended by all participants, including:

- provision of appropriate technical assistance, where needed, for launching and implementation of the indicators development programme in interested countries;
- encouragement of twinning arrangements with appropriate technical assistance and start-up funding;
- hosting and organizing international meetings related to the issue, in order to promote national acceptance of the process and launching the national coordinating mechanism.

72. Non-testing countries who have parallel indicator programmes should be kept fully informed and involved in the CSD indicator development programme, to the extent possible, to maintain support for the CSD programme and to learn from the experience of other countries in this regard.

73. Similar international workshops, as the presently convened, are highly useful to provide a forum for testing countries to share experiences and results with each other and other partners and organizations involved in the development of indicators of sustainable development.

Fourth International Workshop on Indicators of Sustainable Development

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Fourth International Workshop on Indicators of Sustainable Development

Pruhonice, 19 - 21 January 1998

Chairman of the Workshop – Vladislav Bizek
Co-chairs: Bedrich Moldan, Lowell Flanders, Edwin Barnes
Rapporteur: Nadine Gouzée

Monday, 19 January

09:00 - 09:30 Registration of Participants

09:30 - 10:15 Opening of the Workshop and Welcoming Remarks

Statement by the Deputy Minister of Environment of Czech Republic Vladislav Bizek
Statement by Bedrich Moldan (Charles University)
Address by Lowell Flanders (UN DESA)
Address by Minna Wilkki (CEC)

10:15 - 10:30 Adoption of the proposed Agenda and Election of Officers

10:30 - 11:00

Results of the Fifth Session of the CSD and UNGASS – Lowell Flanders
Status of Implementation of the CSD Work Programme on Indicators – Birgitte Bryld

11:00 - 11:20 - Coffee Break

11:20 - 12:20 Report on the results of regional workshops and regional indicator initiatives

Asia and the Pacific
Latin America and the Caribbean
Africa
The European Commission and EuroStat)
The Mediterranean Region
Discussion

12:20 - 13:00 Brief country reports from each testing country providing status of the testing phase, problems encountered and solutions sought.

Countries in alphabetical order.

13:00 - 14:30 - Lunch

14:30 - 18:00 (16:30 - 16:50 Coffee Break) Brief country reports from each testing country providing status of the testing phase, problems encountered and solutions sought – to be continued

Questions and General discussion, if time permits

19:00 - 21:00 Welcome Party

Tuesday, 20 January

09:30 – 09:40 Plenary session – organizational remarks

09:40 - 13:00 (11:00 - 11:20 Coffee Break) Small Group working sessions based on regional groupings

- the small groups will discuss and prepare conclusions and recommendations on the national testing with particular attention to:

(a) the adequacy of institutional arrangements in the countries to carry out an indicators program, stakeholder involvement, etc.
(b) adequacy of or problems with the CSD methodology
(c) data availability and data gaps
(d) the reporting format
(e) experience from twinning arrangements, where such exists
(f) training and capacity building needs
(g) experience with linkages and aggregation, if any
(h) next steps

13:00 - 14:30 - Lunch

14:30 - 18:00 *(16:30 - 16:50 Coffee Break)* **Plenary reports of small working groups sessions**

General discussion and formulation of overall conclusions and recommendations regarding experience with national testing to date

18:30 – 19:00 Dinner

Wednesday, 21 January

09:30 - 11:00 Reports on the status of related Indicator development initiatives

UN Statistical Department Compilation of environmental indicators and indicators for follow-up to major UN conferences by UNSD (Peter Bartelmus)
EUROSTAT (Jochen Jesinghaus)
SCOPE (Bedrich Moldan)
Discussion

11:00 - 11:20 - Coffee Break

11:20 - 12:00 Main issues related to linkages and aggregation

Overview (Arthur Dahl and Peter Hardi)

12:00 - 13:00 Presentation of Phase III of the CSD Implementation Plan and Discussion (Birgitte Bryld)

Discussion

13:00 - 14:30 Lunch

14:30 - 17:00

Presentation, Discussion and Approval of the Workshop Report

18:00 – 18:30 Dinner

Annex III

Summary of Country Reports submitted to the Fourth International Workshop on Indicators of Sustainable Development

Barbados

Following the Regional Workshop for Latin America and the Caribbean in March 1997, Barbados decided to join the CSD ISD voluntary testing programme based on a recognition of the importance for SIDS of measuring and evaluation tools which provide information for environmental management through gauging environmental change over time. The usefulness of the CSD ISDs was acknowledged through the establishment of a sub-programme within the Sustainable Development Work Programme of the Ministry of Environment for Barbados. The National Commission on Sustainable Development also recognized the importance of the issue and in response thereto established a Steering Committee charged with developing the indicators programme. The 1998 indicator activities focus on involving relevant government agencies in the process, producing position papers on indicators, draft Barbadian-specific indicators, identify gaps in the CSD list, consult with the public and development of a public awareness raising programme. It is expected that by March 1999, a programme for testing of country specific indicators will be developed. It is noted that the development of indicators to date has been hampered by problems of data sources, access and frequency of data collection. Preliminary comments on the CSD list include lack of indicators for reef conservation and health of reef ecosystems as well as the inclusion of vulnerability indices. In addition, suggestions for additional perspectives are made, including indicators for strengthening of major groups, land use management, freshwater resources, protection of the atmosphere, poverty, desertification and institutional and human health issues.

Belgium

In June 1996, the Inter-Ministerial Conference on the Environment (ICE) in Belgium, composed of three regional Ministers of Environment and the Federal Minister of Science, decided that Belgium would be a testing country in the CSD program on indicators. The ICE can be considered as the national coordination mechanism for testing the environmental indicators. The ICE has established a working group which is in charge of the implementation of the test, i.e., reporting on the existing information systems and evaluation of the adequacy and usefulness of methodology sheets of the CSD with regard to the environmental indicators for sustainable development in Belgium. This working group is mainly composed of representatives from the Regional and Federal Environment Ministries. The Federal Planning Bureau, which also takes part to this group, is the international focal point of Belgium. One of the tasks of this group was to identify for each indicator whether the matter covered by the indicator was under federal or regional

responsibility. This was important, in particular since data and ways to calculate the indicator may vary from one region to another. The group concluded that data are, in principle, immediately available for 21 of the 57 environmental indicators of sustainable development. In November 1996, Belgium started the testing with the in-depth analysis and filling-in of the methodology sheets of three indicators. Main conclusions of this exercise are that the methodology sheets approach can help the country to measure sustainable development needs and focus national attention on improving availability of data for the implementation of Agenda 21 and that two of the indicators considered provide considerable information at the international level as a global evaluation and comparison tool, but that they are not precise enough to pilot the national policies and strategies. It was also concluded that the implementation process of the testing was more time-consuming than anticipated. Broader participation of major groups in the testing process will depend on the level of human and financial resources allocated to it by all departments concerned. According to a decision taken by the ICE working group, the Federal Planning Bureau, which is also focal point for the testing of ISDs, has completed the Format for Reporting on Progress of the National Testing of Indicators, required by the CSD to assess the implementation of the testing of indicators of sustainable development.

Bolivia

The Government of Bolivia is preparing a National Plan of Social and Economic Development the strategic lines of which have, as a fundamental paradigm, integral sustainable development and poverty alleviation as main objectives. Therefore, adequate measurement instruments as to monitor the application of the plan was seen to be of fundamental importance. The national testing of indicators in Bolivia is still in its preparatory phase as part of a broader project to create a National System of Information for Development (SNID). The idea of SNID is to have a focal centre to register all information sources to facilitate access to information produced in the country, which is presently not recorded, primarily resulting from research made by NGOs and universities, as well as development projects which produce information to monitor and evaluate their results. A series of activities in the context of SNID is under implementation including development of the conceptual framework and possible indices and their reliability among others for monitoring the application of the national plan. The indices will undergo testing and follow-up reports will be prepared of development and application of both SNID and the indices.

Brazil

The testing of ISDs in Brazil will be developed by networking state level agencies through the National Environmental System (SISNAMA) and organized within the National Integrated Environment Monitoring Program (MONITORE). From 1998-1999, the Ministry of Environment, Water Resources and Legal Amazon (MMA) will be developing MONITORE via funding, provision of technical skills and inter-agency cooperation to help overcome the present gap between state agencies in the experience with monitoring sustainable development indicators. An inventory of the

available data and methodologies will be produced with the Brazilian Geographical and Statistics Institute (IBGE), as a starting point for the testing process. A first inventory of the available data sources and a directory of institutions working on environmental monitoring will be finalized by April 1998. This information will be made available at the MONITORE homepage on the internet. A second step includes testing of the proposed methodology and indicators mainly from the environmental cluster. The final selection of indicators for testing will be discussed and agreed by the state agencies. It is expected that the Brazil-Germany twinning arrangement will be essential for speeding up this review process.

China

The lead group for the testing of ISDs in China was established, consisting of the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) and the State Statistics Bureau (SSB). Furthermore, a working group of experts from different research and educational institutions was established. Phase I of the national testing has been set out based on initiatives in indicator development already undertaken in the national context. This initiative includes a proposed Green GNP, a set of urban environmental, economic, social and institutional indicators, local case studies, etc. Phase I of the national testing will therefore include a summary of past studies and endeavours in this field, selection of national indicators for testing and the planning of a national workshop. Problems identified to date include: the methodological adaption to the practical situation in China and regional differences in applying them; applicability of indicators due to the difficulties of aggregation and high cost of testing; data availability and quality; financial constraints and the need for a strengthened coordination mechanism. Future needs identified include: awareness building among Government officials and the public; capacity-building to promote the studies and testing of ISDs; financial resources and technical assistance as well as further exchange of information and cooperation at the national level.

Costa Rica

The Government of Costa Rica, under the coordination of the Ministry of National Planning (MIDEPLAN), has promoted over the last three years, two capacity-building initiatives for sustainable development advancement, with implications for the implementation of indicators of sustainable development. First, the organization of a National System for Sustainable Development (SINADES), and second, the creation and consolidation of a National System of Indicators of Sustainable Development, known as SIDES (SIDES- Sistema de Indicadores sobre Desarrollo Sostenible). These initiatives have led to the consolidation of a large data base which includes economic, social and environmental data. The National System for Sustainable Development has been conceived as a mechanism to articulate strategies, policies and actions within the Costa Rican public sector, oriented to the promotion of sustainable development. The SINADES initiative has been advanced with the support of a technical cooperation project funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). This project includes two main activities that have contributed to create capacities for

the implementation and use of indicators of sustainable development. The first is training, oriented to promote changes in attitudes, through workshops, courses and conferences focusing on sustainable development topics, including ISDs. The second is institutional strengthening, which include activities related to: (a) the definition of operational procedures and legal instruments to institutionalize SINADES; (b) the creation of a networking mechanism, to facilitate exchange of information and promote interaction; (c) the development of indicators of sustainable development and the definition and consolidation of institutional arrangements for their implementation; and (d) the consolidation of a National Geo-Computing Center. SIDES is a work program of the Government of Costa Rica for the design and implementation of Indicators of Sustainable Development, lead by MIDEPLAN. Over the last two years, activities have concentrated on three processes. First, the construction and consolidation of a large data base located at MIDEPLAN. Second, the creation of a network of data providers in public and private organizations to support such data base. And third, the creation of institutional capacities within MIDEPLAN for making of SIDES a "sustainable" process within the Costa Rican public sector. Finally, note should be taken of the consolidation of a National Commission on Information for Sustainable Development by a Presidential Executive Decree and the creation of an Observatory of Development at the University of Costa Rica.

Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, the international process of testing the sustainability indicators is seen as a part of a broader process of building up a national comprehensive information system on sustainable development. This process is lead by environmental institutions as the Ministry of Environment (MoE), Charles University Environmental Center and the Czech Ecological Institute (CEI); a small expert Working Group on Sustainability Indicators was established at the onset of the project. A designated Focal Point – currently at the Charles University Environmental Center – has been working in a close cooperation with other institutions, namely the Czech Statistical Office. In order to get a political mandate for the forthcoming phases of the project, the Focal Point might be transferred to the MoE. The Working Group has worked out and submitted to the MoE a draft list of sustainability indicators including the reference to the basic CSD indicators, information on the applicability of proposed indicators, relevance to the Czech Republic context, and data availability. A debate on the sustainability indicators has not received broader attention so far – it remains a domain of the experts from various mostly environmental organizations. More activities and broader interest can be observed at a local level – a few municipalities have launched their strategic planning efforts that include sustainability indicators in some cases. The MoE has recently granted the IBM Company to build up a comprehensive information system using the sustainability indicators that will be operated by the MoE and widely accessible via the Internet; the debate on the contents, formats of outputs, access, users, etc., is under way. Several bottlenecks in the implementation has been identified. The debate on the sustainability indicators has not reached other important sectors (transportation, industry, agriculture, etc.); there is no multisectoral body that would coordinate and make decisions at the top political level; The testing process has not made a

great deal of progress yet – an evaluation of usefulness of the indicators, assessment of the aggregation and linkages between different aspects of sustainability, etc., are the most pressing topics to be done; Any effective work to involve as many stakeholders as possible in the process has not been done; The entire testing process is still driven more by the international commitments of the Czech Republic than by the real effort of the Czech citizens (both the politicians and the public) to measure and embark on the sustainable development path.

Finland

The Government of Finland established the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development in June 1993 which aims at promoting the national implementation of sustainable development. This Commission has set up a network of different Ministries and organizations with the task to coordinate the development and testing of indicators in 1996. The CSD indicator testing in Finland started in January 1997. A special data collection sheet was developed for testing purpose. A group of 12 people from different Ministries and research institutions took part in five workshops, where the data sheets were evaluated. By the end of spring 1997, all indicators were preliminarily examined, and 57 were chosen for testing and reporting on the basis of clearly defined selection criteria. During the summer of 1997, the data was collected with the data collection sheets. The results were presented to a larger audience during a seminar in September. Then, the CSD indicator sheets were filled out for the selected indicators, and a final report was submitted in 1997. In the future, Finland will concentrate on developing its own National Set of Sustainable Development Indicators, of which some might be taken from the CSD list, though other new indicators will be introduced as well, in accordance with the countries national goals, targets, and priorities. Finland and South Africa have agreed on twinning in the testing process. The nature of twinning has been the exchange of information and expertise. The delegates and experts have met three times. Some reasons for success of the indicator testing in Finland were considered the fact that Statistics Finland was involved in the process from the beginning, that the testing process was well organized from the start, and that data could be acquired free of charge. Some confusion was caused by the fact that there was uncertainty as to whether one needed to select indicators for national purposes or indicators for international comparison.

France

The French testing of the CSD ISDs is coordinated by the Ministry of the Environment with the French Institute for the Environment (IFEN) as Focal Point. The testing is organized with two phases and two working groups. A technical testing by the 'technical group" is undertaken to evaluate the ability of the French statistical system to compile the indicators, compare between national and UN calculation methods and specifications and finally, evaluate the quality of the methodology sheets. The political test is focused on evaluating the relevance of the indicators in the national context and their usefulness for decision-makers. This is done by the "political group". The

technical test has been based on a questionnaire prepared based on guidelines provided by DPCSD sent to experts identified among national institutions in charge of data collection, compilation and analysis. Only 8 indicators were not appraised due to their lack of relevance for France, or as they were under preparation. The political test was based on a questionnaire including a partial translation of the "blue book" to provide an overview of the indicators and more synthetic information and focus on definitions and policy relevance. All 134 indicators were appraised by experts from the French Commission on Sustainable Development, an interministerial group involved in the discussions of sustainable development, the scientific community and NGOs involved in development and environment. Obstacles encountered in the implementation of the national testing included the difficulty of mobilizing experts, assessing the policy relevance of the working list taking both national and international comparability into account and finally, difficulties in specifying the relationship between indicators selected and the National Sustainable Development Strategy. Some criticisms to date include: the lack of integration in the framework of the different dimensions of sustainable development; the low relevance of establishing a single selection of indicators for all UN member countries; and the human and financial resource requirements to carry out the testing. A twinning arrangement with Tunisia has recently been established which was facilitated by the Blue Plan. A first report on this process is expected by July 1998.

Germany

In Germany, the first year of the testing phase has focused on two major aspects: The first is setting up the organization/consultation mechanism that is coordinated by the Federal Ministry for the Environment. This includes an interministerial working group of all federal ministries; a coordination team consisting of the Federal Environment Ministry, the Federal Environment Agency and the Federal Statistical Agency; a National Indicator Committee with 23 representatives of relevant major groups and, an indicator expert team of 20 scientists from different disciplines in order to achieve an active integration of all relevant groups from the beginning. The representatives of the National Committee and the Expert Group were asked to comment on the CSD working list and will be consulted in the drafting of the final interim report of the testing. The second aspect has been the selection of issues and indicators to be tested. This selection is of prime importance when analyzing the CSD working list, and is done in the light of the political relevance and adequacy for Germany. As the selection will be done according to national priorities, new issues and therefore indicators, will be added to the current CSD list. In 1998-1999, the national testing will focus on elements such as data work (production of time series for selected indicators), the development of methodologies for newly proposed indicators including comments on methodologies in the "blue book", assessment of selected indicators with regard to policy oriented usefulness and inter-linkages, proposals for "better" indicators, methodological aspects of aggregation etc. and finally, the twinning arrangement with Brazil which includes the organization of a workshop in Brazil in 1998.

Ghana

Ghana decided to join the testing of the CSD indicators of sustainable development after having hosted the African Regional Workshop in Accra in June 1997. It is realized that a number of agencies are currently engaged in indicator development activities covering the field of social, economic and environmental development. However, none of these are integrated sustainable development activities and participation in the CSD programme is meant as one way to address this issue. A National Committee on Indicators of Sustainable Development involving all crucial stakeholders for sustainable development has been formed. The Committee will identify appropriate indicators for use in the country and monitor the national indicators programme. In pursuing its activities, the Committee endeavours to attach the testing activities to various sustainable development initiatives such as the Ghana Capacity 21 Programme and the Poverty Reduction Programme. It is anticipated that the major problems to be encountered will be in the areas of capacity, reliability, quality and timeliness of data. Ghana hopes to enter a twinning arrangement with another country to share experiences in its indicator testing programme.

Kenya

The national testing of indicators of sustainable development is organized so that the National Environment Secretariat (NES), a department within the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, acts as the Focal Point. NES is charged by the Government to coordinate all matters pertaining to the environment. This coordinating role is carried out through the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Environment (IMCE) which has created a sub-committee on Environmental Economics and Accounting responsible for the development of indicators, among other issues. Membership includes government ministries, departments of planning and statistics, academic and research institutes, NGOs and the private sector. At the international/regional level, Kenya has no close working partnerships in this area, but is searching for a twinning arrangement to assist with the development and implementation of the indicators programme. Activities within the indicators programme include the identification of data needs. The Government convened with the assistance of UNDP in Kenya, an environmental data needs assessment workshop to facilitate the process of preparing indicators for monitoring and evaluating the achievement of sustainability. Based hereon, the sub-committee identified a number of gaps and needs including: technical and financial resources, data availability and access, national and international networking and awareness at all levels of the importance of ISDs. Future plans include: awareness and capacity raising in all government departments; the identification of networking modalities in data and indicator development, identification of priority areas for testing of ISDs given the regional disparities; and soliciting financial aid for the programme.

Maldives

Maldives has established a National Coordinating Mechanism which comprises representatives from the relevant governmental organizations, NGOs and Major Groups. The Ministry of Planning, Human Resources and Environment has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the testing programme on national indicators of sustainable development. Among the activities planned is a first national workshop to identify relevant indicators, from 1-3 March 1998. The workshop will be convened with the financial support and expert advice from ESCAP. Future plans for the national implementation will be reported at a later stage.

Mexico

In Mexico, several steps are being taken to improve and systematize environmental information. Among these actions, the main is the Agreement of Collaboration between the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI) and the Ministry of the Environment (SEMARNAP), signed in 1995. This institutional arrangement has facilitated the elaboration of a second compendium on environmental statistics currently in printing thereby creating a point of departure for launching an initiative to conform an Inter-institutional Committee whose function would be to coordinate the harmonization, collection and systematization of the environmental information. Furthermore, greater interaction has been created among federal ministries and other public agencies, and the production of environmental and sustainability indicators, making use of methodology sheets and the OECD framework, has been strengthened. In addition, a National System of Information on Environment and Natural Resources to be implemented in the long run has been designed. At this point in the process, it was concluded that the data availability in Mexico is improving, resulting in the release of several reports on the state of the environment, etc. The initiative to harmonize part of the environment statistics and indicators to the methodologies on sustainable development is still in its initial phase. The development of a joint work programme on ISDs by SEMARNAP and INEGI is underway and training workshops, etc. are being developed to reinforce the capacity building aspect

Morocco

Values for a number of indicators are published regularly in the country for the large part in relation to national priorities of the Government. Indicators include access to health and basic services and indicators of poverty. It is of priority in the country that the indicators reflect differences between the urban and rural population as well as different groups of society.

Philippines

Following the Regional Workshop for Asia and the Pacific in late 1996, the Philippines has

begun the elaboration of a national testing programme for ISDs with the assistance of ESCAP. The Philippines Council on Sustainable Development (PCSD) will serve as the coordinating mechanism for the process. Undertaking this initiative builds on an ongoing effort in the country to develop a national set of indicators commissioned by the UNDP-funded Integrated Environmental Management for Sustainable Development (IEMSD) Programme. Activities undertaken in this context include a review of initiatives to develop sustainable development indicators; the formulation of a framework and system of ISDs to aid the monitoring of compliance with Philippine Agenda 21; and finally, a pilot test of the proposed indicators using recent Philippine data. A series of consultations and workshops were conducted involving the Government, academia, research institutions and NGOs. A final report of the study is intended as a sourcebook on ISDs and is now in the final stages of printing. One result of the process is a selection of 153 indicators for the Philippines presented in the pressure-state-response framework. A workplan for the national testing of these indicators has been prepared by the PCSD Secretariat and includes elements of organization, implementation, evaluating and reporting activities.

South Africa

South Africa, through its Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, has agreed to assist the CSD in the testing of the working list of sustainable development indicators. The testing was initiated in February 1997 after the Committee for Sustainable Development agreed to the process to be followed. It was felt that collection of all available data for the CSD indicators would be beneficial to CSD indicator development as well as a good platform to contribute to a National State of the Environment Report for South Africa. Institutions, including NGOs, that operated at the national level, were invited to participate in the process. A questionnaire was designed to obtain in a structured format, information on the relevance of indicators, comprehensibility of the methodology sheets, and the international comparability of the data. It was concluded that there was a general need for raising the awareness of the usefulness of the indicators, which was mainly addressed via information packages on the programme. Further activities in this area still have to be developed. One aim of the first year of testing was to obtain data sets on indicators already in use in South Africa. This effort was seen as far more time consuming than anticipated. In preparation of the first annual report, data has been tabulated, and where possible, time series data are presented in a graphical format. A few indicators are also available in geo-referenced format. In terms of the organization of the testing, a twinning arrangement was established with Finland in early 1997 which has been highly successful to date. The nature of cooperation has primarily been exchange of information and ideas including the convening of several meetings in this context. The results of this experience will be reflected in a joint report submitted to the CSD. The continuation of the testing process is subject to the availability of both human and financial resources. Should the programme be continued, four focus areas should be pursued. These include the hosting of sectoral workshops to discuss in more details the proposed indicators and methodology sheets; the publication of data sets collected during the first year of testing; the

development of a sustainable development home page on the internet where results of the testing would be reflected; and the development of a comprehensive communication strategy with regard to the ISDs and the testing process.

United Kingdom

The work on the UK pilot is being carried out in three phases. Phase I involves the testing of a selection of the UN-CSD indicators in the UK. Phase II concerns the evaluation of the indicators to be tested, and Phase III the reporting to the UN-CSD. A considerable number of organizations, both within and outside Government, has been consulted during the course of the UK pilot process so far. Phase I has been completed and a provisional list of 51 indicators have been selected for testing. Work relevant to Phase II for many of the selected indicators is well advanced, but there is a considerable amount of work still to be done for the formal and systematic evaluation and reporting process. This will be completed in 1998. The final phase will be to produce a report, including where practical, the indicators themselves and commentary about the values, trends, particularly in relation to nationally or internationally agreed targets and commitments. The report will also include commentary on the relevance, construction, and ease of collection of the individual indicators. It is anticipated that this final phase will be complete by the end of 1998. The process has been facilitated by the fact that a number of mechanisms through which the Government consulted and received advice on sustainable development was already in place, through the existence of the UK National Strategy and the 1996 national set of indicators, and the availability and feasibility of the collection of data.

Venezuela

Venezuela is participating as a pilot country for the testing of indicators of sustainable development, for which the Environmental Statistics and Information Centre acts as a focal point. The centre is part of the Directorate of Environmental Information of the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Renewable Resources. For this pilot project, 33 indicators from the CSD working list which were relevant to national priorities were selected for testing. Due to time restrictions, only 13 of the 33 indicators were tested and will be reported on according to the indicator report sheets. The tested indicators cover social, economic, environmental and institutional indicators. The effort of testing ISDs is part of a broader effort to develop an Environmental Information System whose primary objective is to provide an integrated and accessible environmental data base, designed to facilitate the acquisition, compilation and analysis of data required to complement the environmental impact assessment and environmental quality monitoring project activities.